



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
1250 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20024

MAR 15 2013

Mr. Will Lightbourne, Director
California Department of Social Services
744 P Street
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Mr. Lightbourne:

I am writing on behalf of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to congratulate the State of California on the successful completion of its Program Improvement Plan (PIP), which was developed and implemented as a result of the State's Federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). The State completed all required PIP action steps and achieved all of its PIP targeted goals. As a result, ACF is rescinding all remaining associated CFSR penalties.

The ACF, in collaboration with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) conducted the CFSR to identify both strengths and areas needing improvement within the State's child welfare system. The review focused on seven outcomes in the areas of safety, permanency and well-being, and seven systemic factors that impact those outcomes. The CFSR culminated in an on-site review that was held during the week of February 4, 2008.

The Final Report, issued on July 17, 2008 notified the State that it was in substantial conformity with three of the seven systemic factors and none of the seven of the CFSR outcomes. Additionally, the state surpassed the National Standards for Absence of Maltreatment in Foster Care. However, the State did not achieve the standard for the remaining five National Standards. As a result, the State implemented a PIP for the two year period from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2011. To address the areas needing approval, the State implemented the following six broad strategies: Expand the use of participatory case planning; sustain and enhance permanency efforts across the life of the case; enhance and expand caregiver recruitment, training, and support efforts; expand options and create flexibility for services and support to meet the needs of children and families; sustain and expand staff/supervisor training; and strengthen implementation of the statewide safety, risk, and needs assessment system.

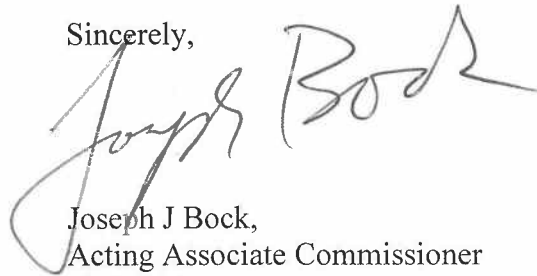
In our October 4, 2011 letter we notified the State that it had successfully completed all of the required actions steps in the PIP. However, it had one remaining National Data Standard—Permanency Outcome 4—Stability in Foster Care that was not met. Consistent with guidance provided to states in our January 2005 Technical Bulletin #1, California had until September 2012 (the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) FFY 2012(b) reporting period) to demonstrate achievement of this PIP goal. Therefore, CB continued to monitor the State's progress towards demonstrating goal achievement during the non-overlapping period.

Though the State submitted its AFCARS data timely, ACF was unable to confirm that the goal was achieved due to data quality issues. As a result, in January 2013, the State resubmitted its data. Subsequently, a final determination has been made that California has successfully completed the PIP. The target for Permanency Outcome 4 was 95.3 and California achieved a score of 95.4. The ACF and CDSS jointly assessed progress throughout the PIP period. As a result, ACF has now verified the State's achievement of all data goals included in the PIP.

We commend the State for the work that it has done to improve its child welfare system and encourage these continued efforts, including improvements to the way in which you review the practices of the agency regarding children and families. Notably, during the PIP period, the State implemented a case review system aimed at collecting data to monitor progress for a number of actions included in the PIP. We understand from your staff that this case review system is currently suspended while being reassessed for improvements. We see the case review process as a step forward in continuing to assess and monitor the status of the State's child welfare system and encourage your work towards improving this process—as well as other components of the state's quality improvement system.

Consistent with our procedures related to the CFSR we have notified the State's Governor of the successful completion of the PIP. We look forward to receiving and reviewing the State's 2013 Annual Services and Progress Report to learn how the efforts that were outlined in the PIP continue to be implemented and impact California's child welfare outcomes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Joseph Bock". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joseph" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Bock".

Joseph J Bock,
Acting Associate Commissioner
Children's Bureau

Cc: Gregory E Rose, Deputy Director Children and Family Services Division; California Department of Social Services; Sacramento, California
Douglas Southard, Regional Program Manager; Children's Bureau, Region IX; San Francisco, California
Debra Samples, Child Welfare Program Specialist; Children's Bureau, Region IX; San Francisco, California
Miranda Lynch Thomas, CFSR Unit Lead; Children's Bureau; Washington, DC